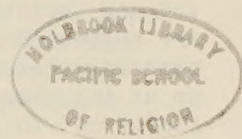


No. 448 - February 22, 1974

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## CHRISTIANS A TARGET OF GROWING REPRESSION IN SOUTH KOREA

Since the declaration of the Presidential emergency measures on January 8 there has been a remarkable change in the political atmosphere in south Korea. With the declaration, the precarious dialogue between the government and the people evaporated instantly, and the iron hand of suppression hit dissidents who were opposed to President Park.

Commentators agree that the Presidential emergency measures are equivalent to "martial law minus military mobilization". It prohibits all verbal or written criticism and all political action against the President or his regime, and those who defy the decree are punished with utmost severity. The present constitution, which was wrought under martial law in 1972, gives Park unlimited power and lifetime tenure.

Two leaders of the Constitutional Revision Movement, Chang Jun Ha and Paik Ki Wan, have been sentenced to fifteen years in prison with suspension of their civil rights for the same period. The CRM, a petition campaign to gather one million signatures, has been supported by many civic leaders including those in the Christian community in south Korea.

On January 17 Rev. Kim Kyong Nak and four other preachers held a worship service to pray for the nation, at which they read a statement demanding the withdrawal of the emergency measures and the restoration of democracy. They also acted to collect signatures for constitutional revision. As a result of this meeting, six ministers and preachers were court-martialed and received sentences of 10-15 years in prison on February 6.

There are at least three significant points to note on this event: (1) These Christian leaders are all working for the rights of the poor urban population and poor workers in the factories. Their daily life has been with the poor, and therefore their perspective in the political situation has been formed through this experience. (2) These leaders are all under forty years of age, and most of them are in their late twenties or early thirties. Young Christian leaders are beginning to take a historical role in Korea society. (3) They viewed their act as none other than a confession of faith. The faith that generated that courage has moved their elders and their colleagues, both inside and outside the church.

Seven medical students were given 5-10 year jail sentences for leading a demonstration and proclaiming their determination to continue to fight for democracy. Five well-known literary leaders have been charged with "spying" for north Korea. They were among 40 writers who signed a statement calling

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Subscription rates: Japan ¥1,000; OVERSEAS Airmail \$7.00; Seamail \$5.00; SINGLE COPY ¥30

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- p. 2 - for the restoration of democracy in south Korea. Three Seoul National University students have also been arrested by the military for violating the January 8 decree.

Leaders of the Christian community, intellectuals, and students -- Christian and non-Christian -- who have any connection with opposition activities or who are suspected of such connections, suffer constant harassment, intimidation, temporary detention and restriction of movement. The KCIA and police pick them up at any time of day for interrogation, persuasion and threats, demanding their pledge not to participate in the democratic movement. Even one American missionary is making a slow recovery from a brutalizing interrogation in late January. This situation makes the life of Christians and other leaders very difficult and inconvenient, to say the least.

In spite of these difficulties, it is remarkable to discover that Christians in Korea are experiencing a quickening of their spirit and strengthening of their will to carry out what they believe is God's will for the good of their people. One Western reporter said after his recent visit that Christians in Korea are speaking out even more courageously since the emergency measures. Students in Hankuk Theological Seminary said in a recent statement, "We are not afraid anymore. We are not afraid of torture, imprisonment, or even death."

Witnesses to the testimony of the Christian pastors and preachers in the military court said that all defendants spoke out forthrightly and boldly, believing that it was the court itself that was being judged. Rev. Kim Jin Hong of Hwalbin Church, during his statement, chided the military court, "What are you doing here in this place, handing out sentences and oppressing the people? Your duty is to defend our land in the front lines at the 38th parallel."

The determination of the Korean Christians is also seen in recent appeals to Christians in Japan. They remind us of the Japanese economic encroachments into Korea and of the political ties of some Japanese reactionary elements with the Park regime, particularly highlighted through the kidnapping of Kim Dae Jung from Tokyo last August.

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#### KOREANS ISSUE URGENT APPEALS TO AMERICANS

In the face of increasing intimidation, arrests and imprisonment, south Korean Christians and students have issued urgent appeals to Americans to help alleviate the raw police state conditions that have prevailed since President Park Chung Hee's January 8 "emergency measures."

The South Korean clergy and laity, in a statement addressed to American Christians, said: "We solicit your ardent prayers for your Korean brothers who are struggling for democracy and freedom of faith. We need your strong encouragement and support more than ever."

Students at Seoul National University, where a groundswell of student protest originated on October 2, said in a statement to "democratic Americans": "You must remember that so long as America supports the dictatorial regime in our land, our people are bound to become anti-American in the near future. You will surely understand that dictators of many Asian countries are not your true friends, and that your support for them will not serve your national interests."

Both statements were drafted in Seoul on February 11 and were flown to Tokyo for release at an emergency press conference at the Japan Christian Center on February 15. The statements couldn't be signed or released inside South Korea because, under the January 8 martial law decrees, all proponents of democracy and civil liberties are subject to military court-martials and prison terms of up to 15 years.



The Korean Christians declared that "now is indeed a time of unusual trial and suffering for us....Nevertheless, as Christian brothers and sisters, we do not hesitate to make our confession of faith for the revival of democracy in our land.

"Our prayers cannot be offered without tears which turn literally into loud cries to God," said the Christians, adding that "it is indeed regrettable that your (U.S.) government supports the unprecedented dictatorial regime in Korea and keeps total silence even when the freedom of our people are completely trampled down.

"We appeal to you to pray for your country so that she may stand on the side of right and justice in Korea."

The Seoul National University students noted the widespread concern in the West over the Soviet Union's forced exile of Alexander Solzhenitsyn and declared that "there are many other Asian Solzhenitsyns" including Korean students, intellectuals and Christians who "face the daily threat of being arrested, imprisoned and brutally tortured without anybody knowing it.

"Some cynics amongst us may be led to believe that your concern for Solzhenitsyn is either sentimentalist or that you are only interested in the people of big countries, since you don't seriously pay attention to the numerous intellectuals who suffer under dictatorships in the small countries of Asia," said the students.

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#### CHRISTIANS HOLD 50 RALLIES OPPOSING NATIONAL FOUNDATION DAY

*The sun-goddess, Amaterasu-omikami commissioned her grandson, Niniginomikoto to descend into the "abundant rice land" and to rule over it, since that land was to be "the country of my descendants." Ninigi's grandson was successful in realizing his grandfather's mission and was enthroned as Emperor Jimmu on February 11 - 2,634 years ago. The present Emperor Hirohito is the 124th in direct line from him.*

Such was the "history" taught in Japanese schools for about seventy years from the Meiji Restoration until World War II. To catch up with the development of Western civilizations, Japan had to have a solid backbone to unite her people. The leaders of the Meiji Restoration made full use of the emperor ideology.

No historian can give any basis for setting February 11 as National Foundation Day. An historical basis was not necessary. What was important was the building up of the strong faith in the emperor ideology. Thus in the fifth year of Meiji (1872) *Kigensetsu* (National Foundation Day) was established, and had been observed solemnly throughout the nation until it was abolished in post-war 1946.

It took two decades for old-time rightists to restore the holiday, this time calling it *Kenkokukinenbi*, a more colloquial term. After several years of effort in the National Diet confronting the opposition, the Liberal Democratic Party in December 1966, finally managed to re-establish February 11 as National Foundation Day.

Christians, along with certain progressive groups, protested and have been protesting ever since. Many Christian offices do not normally observe this national holiday. In the Kvodan calendar, the day is designated "The Day to Protect the Freedom of Faith".

The highlight of the day each year is the city-wide rallies concentrating on the meaning of the Christians' opposition to this holiday. This year, according



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p. 4 - - - to the *Christ Weekly*. Fifty such rallies were held from  
- - - - - Hokkaido to Okinawa. The following are some samples:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Topic or Slogan</u>
Sapporo	270	Stop Yasukuni Bill; 2.11 is Not a Holiday
Saitama	150	Freedom of Faith and the resurgence of Militaristic Thought; <i>Kigensetsu</i> Problem and Yasukuni Bill
Tokyo	1200	Yasukuni--A Question to the Japanese; The Living Emperor System and Our Struggle
Nagoya	86	Opposition to Yasukuni Bill; Opposition to <i>Kenkokukinenbi</i> ; Support <i>Tsu</i> Case (a Shintoist municipal groundbreaking ceremony ruled unconstitutional by one court); Support Court Case of the Wife of the Late Self-Defense Forces' Man (who was enshrined in a local Shinto Shrine against his Christian wife's wishes--- see JCAN, Feb. 9, 1973, p.5)
Kyoto	200	What is the State?: Stop Yasukuni Bill
Okinawa	150	Stop Yasukuni Bill

"The Emperor system is deeply rooted in the Japanese mind," said a panelist at the Tokyo meeting, "This makes our country inclined to imperialistic and militaristic exploitation of others. It is important that we seek an alternative value system." A Sapporo lecturer emphasized: "Many war criminals were executed on the charge of killing others. Why hasn't the state power which forced these people to kill others ever been questioned? Instead, as shown in the bill to nationalize the Yasukuni Shrine, the war deeds are praised by the State."

A Korean participant at a Nagoya meeting cried out: "The same emperor system ideology that supports Yasukuni Bill enforces Japanese discriminatory practices against Korean residents. Unless Christians seriously tackle this issue of Korean discrimination, the Yasukuni struggle will never bear fruit."

The Tokyo meeting was followed by a massive street demonstration. The Christians shouted slogans such as "We won't die for Emperor"; "Liberal Democratic Party, don't violate the freedom of faith"; "Don't allow economic domination in Asia." An observer of the demonstration remarked, "How free they are in expressing their voices against the present regime. In Korea or the Philippines it would mean the death penalty or life imprisonment--which makes it all the more important that they achieve their goals in Japan today."

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#### SHUSAKU ENDO CHALLENGED BY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Shusaku Endo, a Roman Catholic novelist who wrote two national best-sellers in 1973 (*Life of Christ* and *By the Dead Sea*), is under heavy criticism from the Catholic Church in Japan and there are indications that he may be censured by the Vatican.

A priest in the church where Endo is a member has used the Sunday mass to advise the congregation not to read Endo's books, and Catholic monasteries are refusing to sell or distribute his books. Nevertheless the books are being widely read, especially by young people, and the *Life of Christ* topped the national best-seller lists for several weeks last fall (see JCAN, Nov. 9 p.5)

The gist of the Church's attacks on Endo's writings is that in the process of re-interpreting Christ from a Japanese vantage point, Endo has "distorted" the Church's traditional interpretation of the Scriptures. The debate has recently



entered the popular media. The February issue of *Bungaku Kai* magazine includes a fascinating discussion on "Why Should We Write About Jesus?" participated in by Endo; Kunio Ogawa, a young Catholic novelist; Father Yūko Hotta; and Kaname Takado, a Protestant playwright.

Father Hotta says that the image of Jesus expressed in Endo's books is a direct challenge to the Catholic Church in Japan. He argues that the image of Christ portrayed by Endo is distorted by his "personal interpretation which is not the same emphasis as that in the inherited Bible of the Church."

In *Life of Christ* Endo says that he wanted to express how a Japanese person looks at Jesus as portrayed in the Bible. Endo claims that the image of an "impotent Jesus" and the "love of God" have special meaning for the Japanese. Since Japanese people tend to worship gods who have suffered and have been persecuted his emphasis, therefore, is on these same images: Jesus hung helplessly on the cross, but this impotent Christ was resurrected. Through this fact helpless and weak disciples became strong and faithful.

The book stresses the concept of a "mother religion" more than a religion of "Our Father who are in heaven." Endo says "this is the nature of Japanese religiosity. As a novelist I read the Bible spotlighting the people who gathered around Jesus."

Endo thinks Judas was the person who understood Jesus best: Judas knew Jesus wanted to stress the love of God, but what the people were looking for was not the love of God but a political leader and a miracle worker. Judas knew that the kind of love Jesus was trying to teach -- as when the women washed His feet in expensive oil -- did not communicate.

Endo says he became a Catholic because of his faithful mother. He says he went through a long struggle to make his faith his own. He tried to bring Christ closer to himself, thus he see Jesus in relation to present society.

#### MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

##### THE UPS AND DOWNS OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

According to statistics published in the *Christ Weekly* last month, the Catholic population increased and the Protestant population decreased in Japan during 1973. The newspaper listed 375,605 Catholics (an increase of 5,285 over 1972) and 722,395 Protestants (a decrease of 15 since 1972)

The United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) membership dropped 4,829 to 195,971. Meanwhile two Protestant bodies--the Holy Spirit of Jesus Church (70,847 members) and the Southern Baptist-related Japan Baptist Convention (25,190 members)--added more than 1,000 members during the year.

Member churches of the NCC listed a total of 298,601 members: the Kyodan, 195,971; the Nihon Sei-ko-kai (Anglican), 52,147; the Japan Baptist Convention, 25,190; the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, 17,678; the Japan Baptist Union, 4,327; and the Korean Christian Church in Japan, 3,288.

##### JAPANESE JOURNAL OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The quarterly periodical of the International Institute of the Study of Religions, heretofore titled *Contemporary Religions in Japan*, is appearing in a new format and with a new name: *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*. The first issue (vol. 1, no. 1) will be issued next month. The journal is intended for anyone with a serious interest in the religious life of the Japanese people.

The journal is available through subscription only at ¥2,000 (\$10 abroad) per volume. Orders may be placed with: International Institute for the Study of Religions, 6-20 Kioi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102, Japan.



THE WINDS OF CHANGE IN JAPAN: LEANING TO THE RIGHT

The Russian author, Solzhenitsyn, was stripped of his Soviet citizenship and forced into exile in Europe. South Korean opposition leader Kim Dae Jung was earlier kidnapped in Tokyo by the ROK-CIA and placed under house arrest in Seoul. Both incidents express the panicky reactions of authoritarian regimes when confronted with conscientious voices seeking freedom. A novelist with pro-Russian orientations, Mitsuhara Inoue, and other Japanese writers are sending a protest to the Russian Government asking for true freedom within the socialist system. Meanwhile, the Asahi newspapers have been banned in south Korea, because of their questioning stance vis-a-vis the Park regime.

For the first time since the war, photographs of the Emperor and Empress appeared on the front pages of most Japanese newspapers. The occasion was their golden wedding anniversary in late January. Beside the photo were printed the Emperor's words: "Many things have changed, but I have not especially changed. I have set store in the imperial traditions, in the hope and happiness of my people and in a prayerful spirit for world peace." In fact the Emperor was forced into a great change, from a god of Shintoism and head of the imperial military system to a human symbol of a nation under a Constitutional democracy. For him to say he has not changed is unfortunate. People shouting "Long Live the Emperor" gathered in a long line around the imperial palace for the occasion.

On the same day extreme rightists of the blood brotherhood called Seiran-Kai (made up of young members of the ruling Liberal-Democratic party), staged a huge rally attended by 25,000 people at the Nihon Budo-kan hall. They all pledged their lives to the "protection of the Japanese nation" and proclaimed an anti-communist stance, demanded a new Japanese constitution (including legalization of the Japanese military) and expressed support for the Taiwan Government.

February 11 was National Foundation Day. The national holiday (banned from 1946-66) was once firmly designated as a symbol of militaristic nationalism. The Asahi Newspaper did not report on joint demonstrations organized by religious bodies to protest the bill to nationalize Yasukuni Shrine, but did report on a young man who performed ritual suicide at the militarist shrine as a "show of love for his country."

Foreign Minister Ohira on Feb. 13 announced an exchange visitation of the Emperor and President Nixon to take place "within this year." This caused a great deal of confusion and later an "apology". Prime Minister Tanaka admonished the Ambassador to the U.S. for initiating the report. Ohira continues to come under fire from the Seiran-kai for not only this announcement but also the Japan-China aviation agreement which he and the Tanaka cabinet negotiated.

The Japan Broadcasting Cooperation is airing a most popular TV serial program (45 minutes every Sunday night for one year) about Katsu Kishu, a founder of the Japanese navy within the Meiji government. Book stores are filled with books about him and one large Tokyo department store even has a special exhibit of his belongings. These events are all happening at a time when the national defense force budget (ca. \$4 billion this year) is once again becoming a center of controversy.

On Jan. 31 the Tokyo District Court acquitted a reporter on a charge of violating the National Public Service Law in obtaining copies of the foreign ministry's secret cables. The government considers the cables important secrets in the relation to Japanese foreign diplomacy. But how is one to understand the promotion to key ambassador posts of foreign ministry personnel related to the "secrets" case? A Foreign Ministry woman secretary had to take all of the rap for the case -- six months in prison with a stay of execution for a year. The government has appealed the case to a higher court in hopes of finding the reporter guilty and further clamping down on Japan's "free press".